

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for auditing security of a remote computer system, comprising:
 - a. at least one secure application server in communication with a global computer network and programmed to receive selectively security audit instruction data from the remote computer system via the global computer network;
 - b. a plurality of scanning machines in communication with the global computer network and programmed to execute selectively a security audit scan of the remote computer system via the global computer network; and
 - c. a central computer, having a memory, configured as a database server and as a scheduler, in communication with the secure application server and the scanning machine, programmed to perform the following operations:
 - a. evaluate a database to determine if a security audit scan is currently scheduled to be run for a user;
 - b. determine which of the plurality of scanning machines is available to perform a security audit scan;
 - c. copy scan-related information into a scanning machine determined to be available and instruct the scanning machine to begin scan; and
 - d. record the results of the scan in the memory.
2. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the secure application server comprises a Web server.
3. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the central computer is further programmed to notify the user via e-mail that a scan is commencing.

4. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the central computer is further programmed to update database to indicate that scan is complete
5. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the central computer is further programmed to notify the user of a completion of a scan.
6. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein when the central computer performs the operation in which the central computer records the results of the scan, the central computer also copies the data to the database and copies the report to the file system on the database machine when scan is complete.
7. A method of auditing security of a computer system, comprising the steps of:
 - a. receiving from a user, via a global computer network, an instruction to perform a security audit scan on a computer system;
 - b. instructing a scanning machine to access the remote computer system via the global computer network and thereby perform a security audit scan of the remote computer system; and
 - c. reporting at least one result of the security audit scan to the user once the security audit scan is complete.
8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of recording the result of the security audit in a computer memory.
9. The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of evaluating which of a plurality of scanning machines is available to perform the security audit scan.
10. A method of auditing computer system security, comprising the steps of:
 - a. accessing a database to determine when a security audit scan of a computer system is to be executed;
 - b. upon determining that a security audit scan of the remote computer system is to be executed, performing the following steps:

- i. copying security audit scan data into a scanning system;
 - ii. causing the scanning system to establish communication with the remote computer system via a global computer network;
 - iii. causing the scanning system to execute a security audit scan of the remote computer system via the global computer network; and
 - iv. storing a result of the security audit scan of the global computer network; and
- b. transmitting a message to a user of the remote computer system that indicates the result of the security audit scan.

[illegible]